

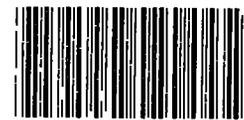
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BY THE US GENERAL ACCOUNTING OFFICE
Report To The Secretary Of Agriculture

**Agricultural Economics Research And
Analysis Needs Mission Clarification**

A systematic and well organized program of agricultural economics research is needed to monitor and assess the health of the food-agriculture sector and the effectiveness of farm policies and programs. However, within the agricultural community there is disagreement on the roles of the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Economic Research Service and the land-grant institutions' departments of agricultural economics. The emphasis of the Service's work has changed from farm management studies to broad agricultural issues, and its mission is not clear. During the past few years the Service has performed socioeconomic research, which GAO believes is questionable from a subject matter perspective, while other priority research and analysis needs have not been given adequate attention. Little has been done to plan for, prioritize, and coordinate agricultural economics research and analysis. GAO makes appropriate recommendations.



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UNITED STATES GENERAL ACCOUNTING OFFICE
WASHINGTON, D C 20548

RESOURCES COMMUNITY
AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT
DIVISION

B-201434

The Honorable John R. Block
The Secretary of Agriculture

This report discusses the Department's agricultural economics research and analysis activities.

The report contains recommendations to you on pages 18 and 25. As you know, section 236 of the Legislative Reorganization Act of 1970 requires the head of a Federal agency to submit a written statement on actions taken on our recommendations to the House Committee on Government Operations and the Senate Committee on Governmental Affairs not later than 60 days after the date of the report and to the House and Senate Committees on Appropriations with the agency's first request for appropriations made more than 60 days after the date of the report.

We are sending copies of this report to the Chairmen of the above named committees; the Chairmen, House Committee on Agriculture, and Senate Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry; your Assistant Secretary for Economics; the Administrator, Economic Research Service; and the Director, Office of Management and Budget.

Sincerely yours,



J. Dexter Peach
Director

D I G E S T

The mission of the U S Department of Agriculture's (USDA) Economic Research Service needs to be examined and clarified. In addition, the Service's relationship with land-grant institutions regarding agricultural economics research and analysis needs clarification. The U S agricultural economics research and analysis system is built around the Service and the State land-grant institutions' departments of agricultural economics.

The Service's work has changed from farm management (microeconomic) studies to broad macroeconomic studies. Such studies deal with agricultural issues, but also include other topics on rural socioeconomic issues. (See pp 6 and 10)

During the past few years, the Service has conducted socioeconomic research which GAO believes is questionable from a subject matter perspective, while other priority research and analysis needs have not been given adequate attention. For example, socioeconomic research which includes issues such as regional crime trends, geographic patterns of infant mortality, educational levels of rural minority groups, and health care in rural America has been conducted. At the same time, important agricultural research issues such as the potential for expanded agricultural exports and the volatility of world demand for U S farm products have not been adequately covered. (See pp. 10 to 14)

GAO made this review because of the importance of agricultural economics research and analysis in providing the data which serve as the basis for formulating food and agricultural policy and programs. GAO reviewed the range of agricultural economics research and analysis activities in terms of the Service's overall mission and program priorities, and its relationship to that of the State land-grant institutions. GAO also assessed USDA's activities with regard to planning, priority setting, and coordination of public sector agricultural economics research and analysis. (See p 3)

USDA'S ECONOMIC RESEARCH AND
ANALYSIS MISSION SHOULD BE
CLARIFIED

The congressional mandate to USDA to provide statistical and economic data and analysis concerned with the farm sector and farm management is very broad and goes back to the Organic Act of 1862, which established USDA

Agricultural economics research and analysis has become increasingly important to provide the basic data for monitoring performance of the food and fiber system, setting farm policy, and targeting and evaluating public farm programs. This is especially the case with the United States' emergence as the world's principal agricultural supplier. (See p 1)

In the 1920s and 1930s USDA was recognized as the leader in agricultural economics research and analysis and made major contributions in the development of basic techniques and agricultural policy. Today, within the public agricultural economics research sector, there is no recognized leader and there is considerable disagreement on the roles of the Service and the land-grant institutions.

The following are current descriptions of roles perceived by the research sector. Universities work on micro-problems and ERS on macro-problems; universities conduct basic research and the Economic Research Service (ERS) conducts applied research; universities work on local problems and ERS works on National problems. Such stereotypical descriptions exist even though today there is no clear cut distinction in the types of work done by the land-grant universities and the Service. For example, both work on National and macro-problems as well as regional and more micro-oriented issues, and both serve various policymakers as well as farmers

Lack of clear roles is a barrier to improving the linkages and communication between the Service and the land-grant institutions. A clarification of mission and roles should make it easier to identify areas of mutual interest and facilitate productive cooperative research. This is especially important in the current atmosphere of tight Federal and State budgets. (See p. 6)

IMPROVED PLANNING AND COORDINATION
OF AGRICULTURAL ECONOMICS RESEARCH
AND ANALYSIS IS NEEDED

Systematic determination of research needs is important because some research needs must be given higher priorities than others. However, very little has been done to plan for, set priorities for, and coordinate overall public sector agricultural economics research and analysis activities. Decisions are made on an ad-hoc basis with little coordination between USDA and the land-grant institutions. This is the case, even though the Congress has assigned USDA leadership responsibility for planning and coordinating agricultural research. (See p. 21)

RECOMMENDATIONS TO THE SECRETARY
OF AGRICULTURE

GAO recommends that the Secretary of Agriculture, in cooperation with the State land-grant institutions,

--examine and clarify the Federal role in agricultural economics research and analysis, including clarifying the mission of the Economic Research Service and its role in relation to that of the land-grant institutions and

--prepare a statement on the Service's mission and role in relation to the State land-grant institutions, and submit it to the appropriate congressional committees for their information and review.

GAO highlights program/clientele and structure/organizational issues that it believes should be considered and addressed (See p. 19)

GAO also recommends that the Secretary provide leadership in planning and coordinating agricultural economics research and analysis by directing the Administrator, Economic Research Service, to actively encourage joint program planning for and coordination of agricultural economics research and analysis with the land-grant institutions as well as other interested Federal and State agencies. (See p. 25)

COMMENTS OF RESPONSIBLE
AGENCY OFFICIALS

The Administrator, Economic Research Service, commenting for himself and the Assistant Secretary of Economics, said the report is worthwhile and will be treated as a useful and positive input. He agreed with the thrust of GAO's recommendations. He said that he recognizes the perception problem with regard to the Economic Research Service's mission and is taking steps to clarify the Service's mission and role. Furthermore, he agreed that the Service can and should assume a leadership posture and said that the Service will do everything it can to provide informal leadership for agricultural economics research activities. (See pp. 20 and 26.)

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ABBREVIATIONS

BAE	Bureau of Agricultural Economics
ERS	Economic Research Service
ESCS	Economics, Statistics, and Cooperatives Service
GAO	General Accounting Office
USDA	U S Department of Agriculture

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Agriculture plays an enormous role in U S. society--in meeting domestic food needs, in making important contributions to world food supplies, and in bolstering the Nation's economy. Agriculture is one of the Nation's largest industries and employers. Its products rank high among all U S. exports and function as a major contributor to balancing U.S. trade deficits.

Agricultural economics research and analysis has become increasingly important in providing the basic data with which to monitor the food and fiber system's performance, upon which to base farm policy, and for targeting and evaluating public farm programs. This is especially critical since the United States has emerged as one of the world's principal agricultural suppliers.

Opening world markets to U S. farm commodities has made American farmers subject to uncertainties in world demand/supply situations. Our international interdependence will be a source of continuing demand for agricultural economics research and analysis on issues related to trade policy, food security, international market instability, market development, the organization and performance of international monetary and financial institutions, and the interdependence among trade and domestic food and agricultural policies.

AGRICULTURAL ECONOMICS RESEARCH AND ANALYSIS

The U S agricultural economics research and analysis system is built around the U S Department of Agriculture's (USDA's) Economic Research Service (ERS), and the State land-grant institutions' departments of agricultural economics. Other Federal agencies, including other USDA agencies, and State agencies also conduct a limited amount of agricultural economics research and analysis generally in support of the agencies' basic mission.

The private food and fiber industry sector also conducts agricultural economics research; such research generally favors the developmental aspects of research in areas of major concern to a firm from a profit standpoint. The vast majority of agricultural economics research and analysis, however, is conducted as an integral part of the so-called USDA land-grant partnership.

ERS

ERS--the largest agricultural economics research and analysis organization in the Nation--conducts research and analysis activities at its headquarters in Washington, D.C., as well as through its field staff located at 38 field locations in 30 States. Field locations are generally in a department of agricultural economics.

at a State land-grant institution ERS was budgeted about \$40 million and about 900 staff (137 of the staff were located at the field locations) for in-house agricultural economics research and analysis activities for fiscal year 1982 ERS's funding is estimated to be about the same for fiscal year 1983, but staff years are expected to decrease by about 20.

ERS, the major source of objective economic information about agriculture, the food and fiber industry, natural resources, and rural development, is divided into the following four operating divisions.

- The National Economics Division - deals with the U S. food and fiber sector. The Division conducts research and analysis on the composition and performance of agricultural commodity production and marketing activities, outlooks for commodities, farm income and food prices, and analyses of public food policies and regulations
- The International Economics Division - deals with foreign demand for U S. exports The Division conducts research and analysis on international economic issues including information on world agricultural production, consumption, and trade, and the resulting impact on U S agriculture.
- The Natural Resources Economics Division - deals primarily with land and water resources. This research emphasizes identifying and quantifying the principal factors that affect the supply, quality, and use of land and water resources, estimating land and water supply potentials and constraints, and assessing the effects of alternative policies and programs on the use and consumption of land and water.
- The Economic Development Division - deals with rural America. The division conducts research on economic and social conditions that affect people living on farms, in rural areas and towns

The National Economics Division, with a staff of about 340, is the largest in terms of budget and staff, and the Economic Development Division, with a staff of about 90, is the smallest

ERS conducts three basic types of agricultural economics research and analysis activities (1) long-term economics research which measures or uncovers new economic relationships, and tests and improves utilization of the relationships previously measured; (2) staff analysis, which applies currently available results of research and statistical measurements to current and perspective problems, issues, and decisions; and (3) situation and outlook work, which develops and disseminates intelligence

on current and short-term perspectives of agricultural and economic developments.

State land-grant institutions

The Federal Government, as well as the States, provide financial support to the State land-grant institutions. Agricultural economics research and analysis efforts at the State land-grant institutions is estimated by USDA officials to be at least equal to that of ERS; total expenditures for public agricultural economics research and analysis activities exceed \$100 million annually

Each State's land-grant institution essentially conducts research and analysis as an independent entity. University programs emphasize State and local issues but also deal with national and international subjects.

OBJECTIVES, SCOPE, AND METHODOLOGY

This is our first review of the economics research and analyses aspects of agricultural research activities. ^{1/} We believe that a review at this time was especially important because public funding for work in agricultural economics research and analysis is declining in real terms, while the demand for agricultural research and analyses is expected to grow.

Our major objective was to review the range of agricultural economics research and analyses activities in terms of ERS's overall mission and program priorities, and its relationship to that of the land-grant institutions. A second objective was to assess USDA's activities with regard to planning, priority setting, and coordination of public sector agricultural economics research and analyses

We did our work primarily at ERS headquarters in Washington, D.C., and at six land-grant institutions: Iowa State, North Carolina State, Purdue University, and the Universities of Maryland, Minnesota, and Wisconsin. The institutions we visited were chosen on a judgmental basis. We selected institutions which (1) would provide us with geographic coverage of two major agricultural sectors of the country--the Midcentral and Southeastern regions, and (2) interacted with ERS on a fairly routine basis either because of large agricultural economics programs (the four

^{1/}As part of our continuing efforts to review agricultural research and education programs we previously looked at the biological and physical science research and extension activities and, among other things, had found lack of clearly defined missions, lack of established national priorities, and inadequate planning.

Midcentral institutions) or because of geographic proximity to Washington, D.C. In addition, we considered location of ERS field staff and emphasis of programs in our selection, in order to cover each of the four areas emphasized by ERS--domestic agriculture, international agriculture, natural resources, and rural development

We discussed the mission and role of ERS and the land-grant institutions; planning for, setting priorities for, and coordinating agricultural economics research and analysis needs; and ERS organizational concepts, with knowledgeable agricultural economists, managers, and others, including

- the 1982 President of the American Agricultural Economics Association and four of the six past Presidents of the Association;
- top ERS officials, including the current Administrator and Deputy Administrator and the Directors or Deputy Directors of each of the four ERS operating divisions;
- the Administrator of the Economics Statistics and Cooperatives Service (ESCS), and the Deputy Administrator for Economics, ESCS, during 1977-81;
- the Chairmen of the departments responsible for agricultural economics work at Iowa State, North Carolina State, Purdue, and the Universities of Maryland and Minnesota;
- staff (agricultural economists and others) of the departments responsible for agricultural economics work at each State land-grant institution we visited;
- ERS headquarters staff,
- ERS field staff located at Iowa State, North Carolina State, Purdue, and the Universities of Minnesota and Wisconsin;
- the Director of the Farm Foundation; 1/
- the Executive Director of the Joint Council on Food and Agricultural Sciences, and the National Research and Extension Users Advisory Board;

1/The Farm Foundation is a non-profit organization whose objectives are to encourage and facilitate improvements in the economic, social, educational, and cultural conditions of agriculture and rural inhabitants.

- USDA officials in the Foreign Agricultural Service and the Agricultural Marketing Service; and
- agricultural economists at the Federal Reserve System and the Farm Credit Administration

We also reviewed selected ERS agricultural economics research projects. We selected projects which would illustrate questionable agricultural as well as traditional research projects which were performed during the previous and current administrations. We did not evaluate the accuracy of research from an economics perspective; rather we looked at it from a subject matter perspective. Through discussions with knowledgeable agricultural economists and reviewing reports and other published materials, we also developed information on priority research needs which are not being met. For research products which we reviewed, we asked how and why a study was initiated, who worked on it, the coordination activities carried out, and how the study was used.

We also reviewed reports and other published materials relating to ERS' and the land-grant institutions' history and agricultural economics research and analysis activities. This review was done in accordance with generally accepted government auditing standards.

CHAPTER 2

THE ECONOMIC RESEARCH

SERVICE'S MISSION SHOULD BE CLARIFIED

ERS' work has deemphasized farm management (microeconomic) studies and emphasized broad macroeconomic studies. Such studies primarily deal with agricultural issues, but also include other topics on rural socioeconomic issues such as research on education and health needs of rural residents. During the past few years ERS has performed socioeconomic research which we believe is questionable from a subject matter perspective, while other priority research and analyses needs have not been given adequate attention. Furthermore, very little has been done to plan and set priorities for overall public-sector agricultural economics research and analysis activities. (Research planning is discussed in ch. 3.) ERS' mission including its role in relation to the land-grant institutions needs to be clarified.

The congressional mandate to USDA to provide statistical and economic data and analysis concerned with the farm sector and farm management is very broad, and goes back to the Organic Act of 1862 (7 U S C 2201 et seq.), which established USDA. In the 1920s and 1930s the center for agricultural economics research and analysis was in USDA's Bureau of Agricultural Economics (BAE), the predecessor agency to ERS. BAE was recognized as the leader in agricultural economics research and analysis and made major contributions in the development of basic techniques and agricultural policy.

Today, within the public agricultural economics research sector, there is no recognized leader, and considerable disagreement has arisen over the roles of ERS and the land-grant institutions. This is a barrier to improving the linkages and communication between ERS and the land-grant institutions. A clarification of ERS' mission and roles should make it easier to identify areas of mutual interest and facilitate productive cooperative research. This is especially important in the current atmosphere of tight Federal and State budgets.

SCOPE AND GROWTH OF THE ECONOMIC RESEARCH

SERVICE: A HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE

As required by the Organic Act of 1862, the gathering of agricultural statistics had been a major USDA function since its beginning. Agricultural economics research and analysis has existed in USDA since 1901, when a farm management branch was initiated. In the next 2 decades, other lines of agricultural economics work were added, and in 1919 the Office of Farm Management was reestablished as the Office of Farm Management and Farm Economics.

In 1922, a time of serious economic crisis for farm people, USDA's economics activities were consolidated into a new

organization--BAE. The objective of BAE was defined by the Secretary of Agriculture as inquiring into every economic condition and force which has an influence upon either production or price. The Congress was informed by the Chief of BAE that the work of BAE was to provide the farmer and the dealer in farm products with the facts needed to act wisely in problems of production and marketing. BAE was recognized by the public agricultural economics research sector as the leader in agricultural economics research and analysis.

The work of BAE was divided into four categories: (1) farm management and farm practice, (2) cost of production and distribution, (3) marketing and distribution, and (4) foreign production and distribution. Research emphasized the collection and analysis of data on production, prices, and markets for farm products. In addition to economics research activities, BAE was also responsible for statistical collection and reporting activities and certain regulatory functions. In 1923, BAE held the first of a continuing series of annual outlook conferences.

In 1938, BAE was substantially reorganized in an effort to transform it into the general planning agency for USDA. Responsibility for marketing and regulatory work was transferred to other agencies; the economic research program and statistical work were retained. The planning work proved to be highly controversial and was gradually cut back. In 1953, BAE was abolished and its functions were divided between two new agencies--the Agricultural Research Service and the Agricultural Marketing Service.

In 1961, with the arrival of the Kennedy administration, agricultural economics research and analysis work was again reorganized with the establishment of ERS. Economics research and analysis work previously grouped in the Agricultural Marketing Service, as well as some work carried out in the Foreign Agricultural Service, was regrouped into ERS, which along with another new agency, the Statistical Reporting Service, was placed under a new Director of Agricultural Economics.

In 1977, with the arrival of the Carter administration, ERS and the Statistical Reporting Service, along with the Farmer Cooperatives Service, were combined into ESCS, which reported to a Director of Economics, Policy Analysis, and Budget. In 1980, the technical assistance functions relative to cooperatives were transferred out and the Economics, Statistics, and Cooperatives Service was reestablished as the Economics and Statistics Service. In 1981, another new administration arrived and ERS and the Statistical Reporting Service were separated back out of the Economics and Statistics Service and reported as separate agencies to the Assistant Secretary for Economics.

Today, ERS' work primarily deals with broad (macroeconomic) agricultural and socioeconomic issues including various issues dealing with rural sociology. ERS does very little farm management or microeconomic analysis.

Overall, ERS' Resources and Research Activities Have Decreased ^{1/}

ERS began operations with a staff of about 811 permanent full-time employees in 1961. ERS gradually grew and in 1969 had 1,017 permanent full-time employees, 270 of which were located in the field. Employment remained fairly constant through 1976. As of January 1982, ERS reported having 897 permanent full-time staff, 137 of which were located in the field.

ERS' budget for economics research and analysis accounts for about 5.5 percent of the total USDA research budget. ERS' budget, although increasing in terms of current dollars from about \$16 million in 1966 to about \$40 million in 1982, has not kept pace with inflation. In terms of constant dollars, the budget has decreased about 8 percent from 1966 to 1982.

ERS is spending less time on economic research, and most ERS efforts are no longer directed at economics research. On the other hand, short-term staff and other activities have increased. ERS estimated that for fiscal year 1980, 35 percent of its activities were for research, 47 percent were for analysis including situation and outlook work, and 18 percent were for data acquisition. According to the former Administrator, ESCS, ERS' emphasis on producing information to help public policy makers and to serve as a staff agency to the Secretary of Agriculture has increased the amount of short-term staff analysis work.

ERS' RESEARCH AND ANALYSIS ACTIVITIES

A look at some of the research and analysis efforts ERS conducted during the past 5 fiscal years will help in understanding the broad scope of its activities.

Examples of some of the research and analysis activities of ERS related to traditional agricultural issues follow.

- Domestic agriculture. Work in this area, generally done by the National Economics Division, addresses the U.S. food and fiber sector. Activities include (1) situation and outlook analysis for major agricultural commodities (animal products, crops, fruits, vegetables, and sweeteners), (2) economics research and staff analysis activities on products, structure, performance, and policy for major agricultural commodities; (3) economic statistics and analysis

^{1/}Because of various reorganizations, complete and consistent data on ERS staffing were not readily available. However, at our request, ERS reconstructed historical staffing data for us.

including cost of production and farm income studies; (4) farm inputs and finance studies; (5) farm sector analysis; (6) food systems research and analysis; and (7) food and agricultural policy research and analysis. Situation and outlook reports are generally issued several times a year and include supply, demand, and price forecasts. Examples of research and staff analysis studies issued during fiscal year 1981 include reports on "Economic Issues Facing Animal Agriculture in the 80's," "Cash Flow and Liquidity Problems in Animal Agriculture," "Farm Commodity Programs: Who Participates and Who Benefits?," and "Alternative Methods for Adjusting Food Stamp Benefit Levels."

- International agriculture Work in this area, generally done by the International Economics Division, addresses foreign demand for U.S. food exports. Activities include situation and outlook analysis, research reports, and staff analysis for various geographic areas of the world, world supply and demand analysis for agricultural commodities, trade policy intelligence and analysis, and agricultural development research. Situation and outlook analysis work involves monitoring, evaluating, and reporting on the situation for food and agriculture in six geographic regions: Africa and the Middle East, Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union, Western Europe, North America and Oceania, Latin America, and Asia. Examples of research reports issued include: "Cost and Structure of Food Grain Production in Northern Nigeria," "Prospects for U.S. Agricultural Exports to Eastern Europe through 1985," "World Trade in Major U.S. Crops: A Market Share Analysis," and "Changes in the International Grain Trade in the 1980's,"
- Natural resources Agricultural related activities primarily address land and water resources for agriculture. Work is carried out by the Natural Resources Economics Division and includes analysis of issues such as farm-land ownership, land use and conservation, water use and conservation, and river basin studies. Examples of issued staff reports include: "Implications of Land, Water, and Energy Resource Policies on Agricultural Production," and "Land Ownership Characteristics and Investment in Soil Conservation."
- Rural America Agricultural related efforts in this area, which are performed by the Economic Development Division, include research and analysis on farm population, farm work force, and small farm research and analysis. Examples of issued staff reports include: "U.S. Farm Population, 1980," and "Agricultural Labor Needs in the Eighties."

The following examples illustrate ERS research and analysis activities that address other than food and agricultural issues,

and are intended to highlight different kinds of activities. These research activities were done by one of the ERS components included in our study (headquarters researchers or field staff located at the six land-grant institutions visited). The examples mainly address rural development studies, but also include work performed under the area of natural resource economics. ERS' broad definition of rural development allows its researchers to investigate almost any happening related to the Nation's nonmetropolitan areas.

--Research on indicators of social well-being. Research in this area relates to analysis of how well off people are in different parts of the United States. The results of one research effort were published in a May 1979 report entitled "Indicators of Social Well-Being for U S Counties." This study constructed four composite indexes or measures of social well-being--socioeconomic, health, family status, and alienation--and used these indexes to measure intrastate and regional variations. The study reported that geographic patterns of socioeconomic, health, and family status were essentially similar, with low status most prevalent in areas with high percentages of minorities including areas with high proportions of blacks in the South, Eskimos in Alaska, and Mexican-Americans and American Indians in the West and Southwest. Ongoing or planned work in this area includes: (a) a draft report on infant mortality, "The Geography of a Social Indicator--Infant Mortality," which addresses geographic patterns of infant mortality; (b) ongoing research which attempts to analyze regional crime trends between 1970 and 1978 using Federal Bureau of Investigation data files as the data source; and (c) planned research to update the 1979 indicators study using 1980 census data.

--Research on education levels of nonmetropolitan minority groups. Research efforts in this area include studies which resulted in a July 1980 report entitled "Education of Nonmetro Blacks" and a September 1981 report entitled "Education of Nonmetro Hispanics." Both studies used secondary data sources for their analysis of issues dealing with general education levels, educational problems, and preparation for the labor force of rural blacks and hispanics. The studies generally found that rural blacks and hispanics lag behind urban whites, blacks, and hispanics on rates of graduation from high school and college and functional literacy.

--Research on health care in rural America. This research has been primarily based on analysis of secondary data. Researchers have been concerned with health needs in rural areas and comparing health resources of rural and urban areas. For example, one research effort resulted

in a July 1979 report entitled "Health Care in Rural America." The study concluded that rural areas have greater current health needs and fewer health resources than metropolitan areas

- Research on impacts of development in rural areas. A major research effort in this area involves research on the impacts of coal development in rural areas in the West. This research effort was initiated in 1975 when the Environmental Protection Agency contracted with ERS to provide data concerning the socioeconomic impacts of expanded surface mining in the Western coal regions. ERS has issued over 30 publications under the coal research effort and has also developed a computer model named "Coaltown" which simulates employment and government's revenue and expenditure changes after a coal mining facility is added to a rural community. A major report entitled "Northern Great Plains Coal Mining: Regional Impacts" issued in June 1982, is a summary of the work in this research area. The report discusses the probable impacts of coal development in small towns in the West where large-scale coal development projects are underway.

- Research in local government employment in rural areas. This research analyzes local government employment statistics as well as characteristics of such employment. For example, a November 1981 report entitled "Health and Life Insurance Coverage of Local Government Employees" points out that the rate of coverage for health and life insurance is higher in private sector employment than in the public sector, and rates of coverage are higher for public employees in metropolitan areas than for public employees in rural areas. Another report entitled "The Mandatory Social Security Coverage Proposal: Potential Impacts on Rural and Urban Areas" was published in January 1982. The study examines the cost impact on local governments if Social Security coverage becomes mandatory for local government employees.

- Research on housing in rural areas. This research analyzes housing trends and needs in rural areas. According to ERS much of its work in this area benefits Farmers Home Administration programs. A March 1980 article "Mobile Homes: More But Where, For Whom, Why" exemplifies the research in this area. This article examines issues such as who typical mobile home residents are, which States have the highest number of households in mobile homes, the increasing size and declining mobility of mobile homes, and the cost appeal and quality of mobile homes.

As illustrated above, ERS is performing a variety of socioeconomic research work in areas not related to agriculture and on topics which only deal with rural development as a secondary issue. Many of the primary issues such as energy development, health insurance, education, and social concerns are of National interest, and work in this area may be of great interest to a variety of people inside and outside of agriculture. However, other Federal agencies have many of these as their primary issue areas and could perform such research if they deemed it necessary. For example, the Department of Education's National Institute of Education is responsible for performing educational research. Likewise, the Department of Health and Human Services performs research related to health issues.

On the other hand, we were advised by State, as well as ERS agricultural economists, that ERS is not adequately addressing certain priority research issues including

- U S. agriculture's economic capability to produce,
- the potential for expanded exports, and the implications of our export potential for total demand on our National agricultural system;
- the volatility of world demand for U S farm products;
- the use and availability of land and water resources;
- the adequacy of transportation systems and port facilities to handle agricultural products; and
- research on the economic viability of small farms

Planning and setting priorities for agricultural economics research is discussed in greater detail in chapter 3.

DIFFERING OPINIONS ON ERS' MISSION

Various knowledgeable Federal, land-grant, and other officials have expressed differing views on the mission or direction ERS should be taking, as well as differing perceptions on the roles of ERS and the land-grant institutions with respect to agricultural economics research and analysis. Various positions on ERS' mission are discussed in the following sections.

Views of ad-hoc committee on ERS-university linkages

In August 1979, ERS convened an ad-hoc committee of land-grant university department chairmen and ERS researchers to discuss mutual problems and interests. One of the issues discussed was that there is considerable disagreement and misunderstanding of the roles of the major public participants in agricultural economics research--ERS and the land-grant university departments

of agricultural economics. This lack of understanding was perceived as a barrier to improving the linkages and communication between ERS and the universities. The following several descriptions indicate the differing group perceptions: (a) ERS works on national problems, and universities work on local and regional problems; (b) universities work on micro-problems and ERS on macro-problems, (c) universities should conduct basic and methodological research and ERS should conduct applied research; and (d) ERS serves a national policymaker clientele, and universities serve farmers and State policymakers. Such stereotypical descriptions exist even though today there is no clear cut distinction in the types of work done by the land-grant universities and ERS. For example, both work on National and macro-problems as well as regional and more micro-oriented issues, and both serve various policymakers as well as farmers. The group also pointed out the need to clarify roles and dispel misconceptions to more easily identify areas of mutual interest and facilitate productive cooperative research. No followup activities by the ad-hoc committee have taken place since the 1979 meeting.

Views of the former Administrator, Economics, Statistics, and Cooperatives Service

The former Administrator, ESCS, during 1977-81 said ERS' mission is (1) producing economic information for use by USDA the Government, and the general public and (2) serving as a staff agency to the Office of the Secretary of Agriculture and other agencies on agricultural policy and program-related issues of the Federal Government. He said this forces ERS to do a good deal of short-term staff analysis, about 60 percent, rather than basic research. He believed the universities dwell more heavily on performing basic agricultural economics research activities, including developing methodological and new technological concepts. He also said, however, that university work tends to center on State and regional issues

Views of the former Deputy Administrator for Economics of the Economics, Statistics, and Cooperatives Service

The former Deputy Administrator for Economics ^{1/} during 1977-81 said ERS' primary mission is to serve the public interest--to provide factual information and objective analysis and interpretation for the improvement of the public welfare. He added that as an executive branch agency, ERS first serves the administration--the policy-level officials of USDA. Therefore, ERS' overall mission is (1) to be the analytical arm of USDA and (2) to perform broad public interest research.

^{1/}Under the ESCS organizational structure the Deputy Administrator for Economics was in charge of ERS.

The former Deputy Administrator for Economics agreed that some clarification of ERS' mission, as well as its role as opposed to the land-grant universities, would be beneficial. He said that although the ERS' mission could be described in general terms the delegation of responsibilities and roles of three of ERS' four operating divisions is not clear. He stated that only the National Economics Division has a clear role. According to the former Deputy Administrator, the role of the International Economics Division as opposed to the Foreign Agricultural Service is somewhat cloudy and, in fact, moves have been made to put the International Economics Division into the Foreign Agricultural Service. Questions have been asked about the functions of the Natural Resources Economics Division, such as what does this division do differently than economists in the Soil Conservation Service or the Forest Service. Furthermore he said that the Economic Development Division could be considered an "orphan" within ERS, and at one time had been placed under USDA's Rural Development Division.

Views of the current Administrator,
Economic Research Service

The Administrator said the ERS' basic mission is to provide useful economic intelligence for public and private decision-makers on policy issues regarding food and agriculture, world trade relationships, the use of our natural resources, and the well-being of rural people. He said that ERS has shifted its focus from farm-level problems and problems of individual marketing firms to national agricultural policy issues and concerns about the overall performance and well-being of the farm and food system.

Views of land-grant university officials
and other interested parties

The 1982 President of the American Agricultural Economics Association ^{1/} said ERS' primary concern is the needs of public policymakers and that ERS neglects its broader mission of serving consumers, farmers, and agribusiness, and the labor market. He noted ERS has become a staff analysis group, doing highly applied work, which has neglected basic research. He said that, in his opinion, many of the brightest agricultural economics graduates prefer to do basic research rather than staff analysis work and, accordingly, ERS is not an attractive employer for them.

^{1/}The American Agricultural Economics Association is a professional organization for agricultural economists and other individuals having a professional interest in agricultural economics. The Association's objective is to further the systematic development of the knowledge of agricultural economics in order to improve agriculture and agriculture's contribution to the general economy.

The Chairman of the Agricultural Economics Department at the University of Maryland said ERS' mission needs rethinking. He said ERS does not operate as if it has a mission. He said the center for agricultural economics research had been in USDA and that USDA had made major contributions in agricultural policy and development of basic techniques, but that over time, USDA has changed so that few ERS economists are doing long-term research. He said the majority of ERS's work now deals with "brushfire" type staff analysis. He stated that perhaps ERS' staff should be split into two groups: a long-term research unit and a staff analysis unit. He said ERS has sufficient staff in terms of numbers to do both, and that perhaps ERS was even too large to function effectively.

The Chairman of the Agricultural Economics Department at Purdue suggested that ERS might have separate units to do staff work and research. He said staff work requires different skills than research; hence staffing needs are different, depending on the type of work being done.

A prominent agricultural economist at the University of Minnesota said economic research capacity has declined over the past 15 years, and the decline of research capacity increases USDA leadership's vulnerability to the charge that it cannot understand and interpret changes in national and international commodity markets, the organization and efficiency of agricultural production, and the viability of rural communities. He said two functions are required to meet the economic needs of USDA--research and analysis, and staff work; and that the personal and professional capacities needed for the staff and research function are rarely combined in the same individual. In his judgment, the distinction between these functions in USDA has been blurred in recent years and this has caused a decline in research relative to staff work, with only about one-third of the ERS budget now being for research, and the migration of skilled researchers from ERS to other organizations. He suggested that economic research and analysis be dispersed more broadly within USDA--in the research, regulatory, and commodity and resource program areas. This dispersion, however, should not be accompanied by the dismemberment of ERS, which could also serve important economics research functions.

The Chief of ERS' Agriculture History Branch said that ERS, as well as the States, had turned away from microeconomic (farm management) activities during the 1960s. As a result, meeting microeconomic needs of the 1970s has been difficult, especially in areas of cost of production, farm finance, and marketing. He also commented that in his opinion, the number of ERS staff with national reputations has declined.

A former ERS researcher, now the Director, Economic Analysis Division, Farm Credit Administration, said ERS has suffered because its mission is not very well defined; accordingly,

justifying its budget is not easy. Furthermore, he said ERS' role changes according to the wishes of each new administration.

ERS field staff made various comments concerning ERS' mission. An ERS Senior Economist told us that ERS is in an identity crisis. "Who do we work for?" and "Who fights for our budget?" are some of ERS' concerns, he said. An ERS field staff economist said that ERS is caught between conflicting goals of research and staff work. Over the last 2 decades, its primary focus has shifted between these two goals from administration to administration. He noted that staff needs depend on which area ERS chooses to emphasize and that good researchers do not necessarily do good staff analysis and vice-versa. The question of appropriate staff was raised by several people. It was pointed out that ERS might want highly trained Ph.Ds to do research, while staff with masters degrees might be better suited to perform staff analysis work. Staffing requirements regarding level of training, as well as field staff versus headquarters staff, highly depend on mission definition. The question of field staff is discussed in the following section.

THE ROLE OF ERS' FIELD STAFF SHOULD BE ADDRESSED IN TERMS OF MISSION

The number of ERS staff stationed at field locations, generally at land-grant institutions, has been declining during the past decade. In December 1971, ERS had 263 permanent full-time staff located at field locations; in January 1982 it had 137.

In 1979, the Administrator of the Economics, Statistics, and Cooperatives, Service held three regional conferences with agency staff. At the conferences he said he had major concerns about the economics field staff and the Service's policies or lack thereof with regard to the field staff. He said the heart of the field staff issue involved difficult and complex questions related to the number, deployment, and program content of field positions. He also said that resolving these questions, in part, depended on (1) the development of coherent, consistent, longer run research priorities and plans, (2) a clearer understanding of the role of the field researcher in those programs; and (3) more effective research leadership from line managers. ERS still has no formal or implicit policy with regard to its field staff.

In our discussions with ERS field staff, we found that uncertainty regarding the role of field staff within ERS has increased and a feeling that, although ERS has no written policy with regard to the future of the field staff, it has an unwritten policy to gradually reduce and perhaps phase out much of the staff. This has caused some morale problems and a sense of uncertainty among some staff.

ERS has no clear criteria for assigning staff to a particular field location

ERS does not have any clear criteria for assigning staff to any particular field location. Although the overall number of field staff has been decreasing, the decrease has not been consistent by location. Some land-grant institutions at which field staff were once located now have none, while at others, staff have remained relatively constant or even increased.

The number of professional field staff at the land-grant institutions which we visited varied, from none at the University of Maryland to six at the University of Wisconsin. Appendix I shows the location of ERS field staff by State as of January 1982.

The Chairman of the Agriculture Economics Department at the University of Maryland said that, although no ERS field staff are located at the university, he would like to have staff located there. He said such staff could interact with university staff on mutual problems, thus facilitating cooperative research efforts with ERS. The senior ERS economist at North Carolina State University said that at one time, almost all land-grant institutions had at least one ERS field staff person located at the institution. He said ERS field staff located in the South have varied widely. Staff at North Carolina State have been fairly level, varying between two and five persons; currently there are three. On the other hand, he said that although there were six or seven ERS staff located at the University of South Carolina, now there are none. The ERS senior economist at Iowa State said that in 1962, 13 ERS staff were located at Iowa State; now there are only 2.

The current and former ERS administrators told us that there are different opinions about the value of the field staff, as well as questions about how best to deal with the issue. Some have suggested that the staff be regionalized at several land-grant institutions, while others believe the staff should be spread out among the various universities. They agreed that this is an important issue which should be addressed by ERS top management. The current administrator said he planned to consider various staff assignment policy options.

CONCLUSIONS

ERS' mission, including its role in relation to that of the land-grant institutions needs to be examined and clarified. ERS' work has changed from primarily microeconomic (farm management) studies to broad macroeconomic studies. Although ERS studies primarily deal with agricultural issues, they also include other topics such as rural socioeconomic research efforts. Some research which is questionable from a subject matter perspective has been carried out while other priority research needs have not been given adequate attention.

The congressional mandate to USDA to provide statistical and economic data and analysis concerned with the farm sector and farm management is very broad, going back to the Organic Act of 1862, which established USDA. Agricultural economics research and analysis has become increasingly important to provide the basic data with which to monitor performance of the food and fiber system, upon which to base farm policy, and for targeting and evaluating public farm programs.

The public agricultural economics research sector disagrees on the roles of ERS and the land-grant institutions' departments of agricultural economics. Lack of clear roles is a barrier to improving the linkages and communication between ERS and the institutions. A clarification of ERS' mission would make it easier to identify areas of mutual interest and facilitate productive cooperative research. In addition, the ERS field staff question should be addressed in terms of ERS' mission. This question will not be readily resolved until the mission issues are addressed.

The resources available for agricultural economics research and analysis activities should be used as effectively and efficiently as possible. This is especially important in the current atmosphere of fiscal constraints.

RECOMMENDATION TO THE SECRETARY OF AGRICULTURE

We recommend that the Secretary of Agriculture, in cooperation with the State land-grant institutions, (1) examine and clarify the Federal role in agricultural economics research and analysis, including ERS' role in relation to that of the land-grant institutions and (2) prepare a statement on the ERS mission and role in relation to the State land-grant institutions and submit it to the appropriate congressional committees for their information and review. The statement should contain explicit mission objectives and priorities. The examination should address, but not be limited to, the following issues.

Program/clientele issues

- What type of economic research and analysis should ERS be engaged in?
- What is the proper mix of long-term research, staff analysis, and situation and outlook work?
- Should ERS emphasize indepth long-term research, staff analysis or situation and outlook work?
- What is ERS' proper clientele mix?

- How much of ERS' effort should be directed toward the farmer, toward broad agricultural policy issues, toward general socioeconomic issues of rural development?
- What are ERS' responsibilities in relation to those of the land-grant institutions?
- Could the land-grant institutions do more of the basic research and analysis for USDA?
- Should ERS concentrate on several basic agricultural research and analysis areas, and could it accomplish this with a smaller but highly qualified staff?
- How useful are ERS products, and is a redirection of ERS staff to higher priority work needed?

Structure/organization issues

- How does ERS's staffing structure tie into its overall mission?
- Should ERS's structure be changed so that it has a distinct research staff and a distinct analysis staff?
- In terms of discipline and educational levels, what type of personnel should ERS have?
- How does ERS' field staff, both type and location, fit into its overall mission?

COMMENTS OF RESPONSIBLE AGENCY OFFICIALS

In commenting on a draft of this report, the Administrator of ERS, commenting for himself and the Assistant Secretary for Economics, said the report is worthwhile and will be treated as a useful and positive input. Agreeing with the thrust of our recommendation, he said that he recognizes a perception problem with regard to ERS' mission and indicated that he is taking steps to clarify ERS' mission and role. This includes developing a document which would address ERS' mission and role (i.e., what ERS is and where it is going; ERS-university relationships; ERS staffing policies, ERS' relationship with other USDA agencies; and priority areas upon which ERS will focus its work.)

With regard to the questionable types of research activities cited in our report, the Administrator believed that we discussed trivial examples of questionable, socioeconomic research. He agreed that priority research areas cited in our report need more attention, but he also pointed out that USDA has a mandate to be the lead department for rural development policies, and as such, performs a limited amount of socioeconomic research. He said, however, that ERS is generally cutting back on such

research activities. For example, in fiscal year 1983, no work will be done in the rural health and education areas.

CHAPTER 3

PLANNING AND COORDINATION OF

AGRICULTURAL ECONOMICS RESEARCH AND ANALYSIS

NEEDS TO BE IMPROVED

Very little has been done to plan for, set priorities for, and coordinate overall public sector agricultural economics research and analysis activities. Decisions are made on an ad-hoc basis with very little coordination among USDA and the land-grant institutions. This is the case, even though the Congress has assigned USDA leadership responsibilities for planning and coordinating agricultural research.

Systematic determination of research priorities is important. Some research needs must be given higher priority than others. We believe that while ERS has been performing questionable types of socioeconomic studies, other priority research has not been given adequate attention.

PLANNING AND COORDINATION EFFORTS IN AGRICULTURAL ECONOMICS

Research planning in agricultural economics is accomplished in a variety of ways by the various State land-grant institutions and Federal agencies. Although individual researchers and individual research organizations give attention to emerging issues and research that will be needed to address them, there is no systematic process to coordinate these efforts among institutions and individuals nor to see the amount of agreement or disagreement on what the future research agenda should be. None of the the individual planning efforts addresses the total spectrum of agricultural economics research as a unit; that is, they do not identify and prioritize overall agricultural economics research needs, nor do they develop action plans to meet those needs or evaluate how well the needs are being met. Thus, it is not possible to compare planned research with research needs and research performed for agricultural economics as a whole

The Congress assigned USDA leadership responsibilities for planning and coordinating agricultural research under the National Agricultural Research, Extension, and Teaching Policy Act of 1977 (title XIV of the Food and Agriculture Act of 1977, P L. 95-113). In addition to help the Secretary of Agriculture formulate basic policies, goals, strategies, and priorities for agricultural research, extension, and teaching, the Congress directed the Secretary to establish two advisory bodies--the Joint Council on Food and Agricultural Sciences and the

National Agricultural Research and Extension Users Advisory Board. 1/

The former Administrator of the Economics, Statistics, and Cooperatives Service told us that he had recognized the need to improve coordination and planning for agricultural economics research and analysis, including institutional arrangements for identifying and conducting cooperative research. He said that such planning should include long-term plans--5 years and over, 3- to 5-year plans, and annual proposals, and should be integrated into the budgetary process. He said that this was one of the reasons he convened the ad-hoc committee on ERS-University linkages in August 1979.

Ad-hoc committee on ERS-University linkages

The ad hoc committee found that no systematic process exists to coordinate efforts to identify important problems in agricultural economics on which future research efforts should focus. The ad-hoc committee suggested that a process be developed for collectively and systematically identifying important problems in agricultural economics on which future research should focus. Furthermore the committee pointed out that ERS, because of its size, must assume a leadership role in this area.

The committee also recognized that the Joint Council could provide a mechanism for looking at agricultural research, including economics research and analysis, as a package and possibly playing some role in coordination. But the committee reserved judgment as to how effective the Council would be. The committee also said that the American Agricultural Economics Association could be used as a vehicle to facilitate coordination of research groups in identifying priority research issues.

With regard to specific research projects, the committee discussed the need to undertake cooperative research projects which would be jointly planned, jointly implemented, and jointly funded. Such cooperative research could include research jointly planned and performed by ERS and the land-grant institutions' departments of agricultural economics, as well as with other

1/The Joint Council is generally made up of research and extension performers, including USDA and State land-grant official. Its primary responsibility is to foster coordination of agricultural research, extension and teaching activities of the Federal Government, the States, colleges and universities, and other private and public institutions; and persons involved in the food and agricultural sciences. The Users Advisory Board is generally composed of research users. Its general responsibility is to prepare independent advisory opinions on food and agricultural science issues.

agencies, especially the Agricultural Research Service and the State agricultural experiment stations.

The former Administrator, ERS, said that he undertook to develop a more formal planning mechanism, but that little was done to implement improved planning and coordination, primarily because the land-grant institutions were less than enthusiastic. He attributed their lack of enthusiasm, in part, to the pressures of time and fear that the Federal Government would attempt to direct the research. He said it was easier to get agreement on priority research issues than it was to get agreement on who would do the research.

Activities of the Joint Council and Users Advisory Board regarding agricultural economics

Both the Joint Council and the Users Advisory Board commented on agricultural economics research and analysis priorities in their 1982 annual reports to the Secretary of Agriculture. The Joint Council identified factors affecting foreign trade and farm income questions and the policy issues surrounding these questions as areas deserving increased research attention.

The Users Advisory Board identified macroeconomic analysis of domestic and international agricultural and food policies as a priority research area, and said that such research should receive greater emphasis within USDA. In particular, with regard to ERS the Board said:

"ERS must do a better job of anticipating problems for U S. agriculture. Price volatility, market pressures, market performance, and price levels must be studied. The economic health of the farm sector--from supply and demand perspectives--must be thoroughly analyzed before public policies are implemented

"In-depth analysis of supply and demand functions for major commodities and resources must support public policy decisions * * * ERS must analyze domestic and international influences on agriculture so that policy-makers can prepare future farm legislation which serves a broader public purpose rather than narrowly focused commodity interests who recently have been the principal beneficiaries."

The American Agricultural Economics Association has attempted to identify research priorities

The American Agricultural Economics Association has taken the initiative and developed its own list of agricultural economics research priorities. We were told that the Association developed its first list about 3 years ago and circulated it among interested parties, including land-grant institutions and USDA. The list of research priorities was recently updated and

presented at the Association's annual meeting in August 1982. It contains eight general priority research program areas. The list does not attempt to develop action plans to address the research needs. Listed in order of priority, the general research areas are:

- Future productive capacity of the U.S. food system
- International trade and foreign agricultural development in a changing world economy.
- Capital markets, monetary and fiscal policy, and their effects on the food system and rural areas.
- Price and income instability in agriculture.
- The economics of public services in rural areas.
- Implications of changing the organization of the U S food system.
- Impacts of higher energy prices on the U.S food system.
- Transportation problems and policies

VIEWS OF STATE LAND-GRANT OFFICIALS

State land-grant university officials generally recognized the merits of improved long-term planning for and coordination of agricultural economics research and analysis activities. They were less than enthusiastic about implementing a formalized planning system because of concern that USDA would attempt to dictate to the States what research should be undertaken. They did agree, however, that leadership was needed in planning for and coordinating agricultural economics research and analysis so that gaps in research coverage could be eliminated and resources could be used as efficiently as possible. They also agreed that ERS was in a unique position to provide such leadership in cooperation with the State land-grant institutions as well as the American Agricultural Economics Association.

VIEWS OF THE ADMINISTRATOR, ERS

The current Administrator told us that ERS is not a Federal/State cooperative agency such as the Cooperative State Research Service or the Cooperative Extension Service and, therefore, has no control over land-grant institutions agricultural economics research and analysis activities. He said, however, that he agrees that ERS should play an active informal leadership role in planning and coordinating agricultural economics research and analysis activities.

CONCLUSIONS

Very little has been done to plan for, set priorities for and coordinate overall public sector agricultural economics research and analysis activities. Decisions are made on an ad-hoc basis, with very little coordination among USDA, the land-grant institutions, and other Federal and non-Federal agencies conducting such research.

Systematic determination of research priorities is important, to adequately describe the food-agriculture sector, monitor its health, assess the problems and opportunities for improvement, and design farm programs to achieve optimum results. Some research needs must be given higher priority than others. In this regard, experts agree that certain types of agricultural economics research, including dealing with farm income and food export policy, have not been given adequate attention.

Planning and coordination of agricultural economics research and analysis should be considered as part of the study on ERS' and the land-grant institutions' mission and role recommended in chapter 2. In the interim, however, in order to better fulfill his responsibilities under the National Agricultural Research, Extension, and Teaching Policy Act of 1977, the Secretary of Agriculture should provide leadership in planning for and coordinating agricultural economics research and analysis.

We recognize that ERS has no direct control over land-grant institutions' agricultural economics research and analysis activities and, in calling for improved Federal leadership we are not advocating that ERS attempt to direct such activities. Rather we are calling on ERS to assume an active leadership role in interacting with the land-grant institutions in overall program planning for and coordination of agricultural economics research and analysis activities, including identifying additional priority research needs. This should include ERS interfacing with the State land-grant institutions' departments of agricultural economics, as well as other Federal and State research and analysis organizations including the Agricultural Research Service, and the State agricultural experiment stations to maximize utilization of resources through improved planning, priority setting, and complementary research efforts.

RECOMMENDATION TO THE SECRETARY OF AGRICULTURE

We recommend that the Secretary of Agriculture provide leadership in planning and coordinating agricultural economics research and analysis by directing the Administrator, ERS, to actively encourage joint program planning for, and coordination of, agricultural economics research and analysis with the land-grant institutions as well as other interested Federal and State agencies.

COMMENTS OF RESPONSIBLE AGENCY OFFICIALS

In commenting on a draft of this report, the Administrator, ERS, agreed, for himself and the Assistant Secretary for Economics, that ERS can and should assume a leadership posture, and said that ERS will do everything it can to provide informal leadership for agricultural economics research activities. This includes expanding dialogues with various groups, including the land-grant universities, agricultural industry groups, and other agencies. Initiatives include participating in meetings with such groups, making ERS data bases available for their use, and cosponsoring consortiums on various agricultural economics topics.

ERS Field Staff (note a) by Region and State

as of January 18, 1982

<u>North Eastern Region</u>		<u>Southern Region</u>		<u>North Central Region</u>		<u>Western Region</u>	
<u>State</u>		<u>State</u>		<u>State</u>		<u>State</u>	
Connecticut	0	Alabama	1	Alaska	1	Arizona	4
Delaware	0	Arkansas	c/ 11	Illinois	4	California	10
Maine	0	Florida	2	Indiana	b/ 4	Colorado	6
Maryland	2	Georgia	7	Iowa	2	Hawaii	0
Massachusetts	0	Kentucky	0	Kansas	2	Idaho	0
New Hampshire	1	Louisiana	0	Michigan	b/ 13	Montana	1
New Jersey	0	Mississippi	3	Minnesota	2	Nevada	0
New York	2	North Carolina	3	Missouri	3	New Mexico	0
Pennsylvania	b/ 9	Oklahoma	6	Nebraska	b/ 15	Oregon	b/ 0
Rhode Island	0	South Carolina	0	North Dakota	0	Utah	1
Vermont	0	Tennessee	0	Ohio	0	Washington	1
West Virginia	2	Texas	b/ 4	South Dakota	0	Wyoming	0
		Virginia	0	Wisconsin	6		
Total	<u>16</u>	Total	<u>37</u>	Total	<u>52</u>	Total	<u>32</u>

Total field staff d/ 137

a/Permanent full time staff Figures supplied to us by ERS Numbers indicate professional staff except as noted

b/Includes one support staff

c/Includes two support staff

d/Includes 129 professional and 8 support staff

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